

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Farm Service Agency
Washington, DC 20250

Notice CRP-380

For: State and County Offices

Commercial Shooting Preserves on CRP Acreage

Approved by: Acting Deputy Administrator, Farm Programs

Walter S. Dick

1 Overview

A

Background

Notice CRP-327 clarified policy about certain commercial activities that are permitted on CRP acreage. This notice was intended to respond to a narrow issue about certain commercial shooting preserves on CRP acreage. Based on the response received to Notice CRP-327, broader programmatic issues not intended to be covered by that notice were discovered.

Notice CRP-330 provided that each County Office submit a report of known shooting preserves that were being operated on CRP acreage. Notice CRP-330 also instructed that any action on Notice CRP-327 be withheld until a further clarification of policy on shooting preserves was issued.

B

Purpose

This notice provides policy about:

- recreational hunting on CRP acreage
- commercial shooting preserves on CRP acreage
- mowing of CRP cover.

C

NRCS

Concurrence

NRCS National Office has concurred with this notice.

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Disposal Date

June 1, 2001

Distribution

State Offices; State Offices relay to County Offices and NRCS State Offices

1 Overview (Continued)

D

Commercial Shooting Preserve Report

Reports received from County Offices indicated the following:

- of the over 450,000 CRP contracts covering approximately 31 million acres, commercial shooting preserves are being operated on only 694 contracts covering 64,709 acres
 - only 141 contracts (20 percent) of the 694 contracts received some form of approval by USDA employees.
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2 Policy

A

Recreational Hunting

CRP participants may lease hunting rights, charge fees for access to hunters, or conduct other similar hunting operations on CRP acreage if this activity occurs during the normal hunting season for the pursuit of game that is normal to the area. Hunting must be conducted consistent with Federal and State laws and bag limits for the appropriate game species.

Note: CRP acreage **shall not** be disturbed during the primary nesting season regardless of hunting seasons.

B

Commercial Shooting Preserves

Commercial shooting preserves may be operated on CRP acreage if **all** of the following apply:

- the commercial shooting preserve is licensed by a State agency such as the State fish and wildlife agency or State department of natural resources
 - the commercial shooting preserve is operated in a manner consistent with the applicable State agency rules governing commercial shooting preserves
 - CRP cover is maintained according to the conservation plan
 - no barrier fencing or boundary limitations exist that prohibit wildlife access to or from the CRP acreage unless required by State law.
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2 Policy (Continued)

B

Commercial Shooting Preserves (Continued)

- related CRP cover maintenance, as determined by FSA STC according to the Field Office Technical Guide and in consultation with the State Technical Committee, must:
 - be performed according to the conservation plan
 - provide benefit and enhancement to **all** wildlife normal to the area
 - be conducted outside the primary nesting season
 - not adversely impact the CRP cover
 - not degrade wildlife habitat benefits, water quality benefits, or erosion control measures.

Important: FSA STC, in consultation with the State Technical Committee, must determine the extent and method of cover maintenance acceptable for all CRP acreage within the State that provides enhancement for all wildlife habitat.

C

Mowing of CRP Cover

As provided in 2-CRP, paragraph 210.5, periodic mowing and mowing for cosmetic purposes is prohibited at all times. Annual mowing of CRP for weed control is prohibited.

Mowing of CRP cover, not to exceed 20 percent of the total CRP acres in a field, is permitted. Such activity must be:

- included in the conservation plan
- part of a State-approved management plan for habitat maintenance and wildlife and land management
- conducted outside the primary nesting season.

Note: The location of this mowing should be changed from year to year.

Until a final status review has been completed by NRCS, COC in consultation with NRCS, may allow participants to spray, burn, and mow the acreage under contract at any time, if this activity is required in the conservation plan to establish the approved cover.

Notice CRP-380

3 Action

A

State Office Action

State Offices shall immediately provide a copy of this notice to:

- County Offices
 - NRCS State Offices
 - State agency responsible for licensing commercial shooting preserves.
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B

County FSA Office Action

County FSA Offices shall immediately:

- provide NRCS Field Offices with a copy of this notice
 - inform producers, using any means available, of the provisions of this notice.
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